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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UN](#) [PHUM](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/UNGA: DUTCH HUMAN RIGHTS PRIORITIES

REF: A. SECSTATE 95334

[1](#)B. 07 THE HAGUE 1939

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Andrew C. Mann for reasons
1.5(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Dutch generally support USG priorities for human rights initiatives at the 2008 UNGA. Dutch priorities include resolutions on religious intolerance and violence against women, and an initiative on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) In a September 12 discussion of reftel A points with Dutch MFA human rights department staff Eran Nagan, Maartje Peters, and Angele Samura, the Dutch generally shared many U.S. priorities for human rights discussion at UNGA. Regarding country resolutions, the Dutch generally oppose "no action" motions. The Dutch support the EU country resolutions on Burma and North Korea, and are interested in staying informed about U.S. plans for possible resolutions on Belarus, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. If the HRC fails to act on Sudan, the Dutch may pursue a resolution at UNGA.

[1](#)3. (C) On thematic resolutions, the Dutch agreed the change to the mandate for the Special Rapporteur for freedom of expression and opinion was a "bad result." At the same time, addressing freedom of expression is a "delicate" issue, and the Dutch will need to carefully consider any initiative. For example, the Dutch are concerned about U.S. interpretations of freedom of expression, which allow, for example, internet providers to host extreme right-wing websites. The issue of defamation of religion, however, is a "red lights on, full alert" issue for the Netherlands. The primary Dutch concern is avoiding giving rights to a religion -- rights are reserved for individuals.

[1](#)4. (C) The Dutch are working on three human rights initiatives at UNGA. First, they are preparing with Belgium an EU resolution on violence against women, supporting programs to combat violence and reduce impunity. Second, the Dutch are drafting a resolution on religious intolerance -- the latest draft is with the EU presidency. Third, the Dutch are preparing an initiative on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. The Dutch are not prepared to share a draft but indicated they will follow the pattern of Norway's 2006 UNHRC initiative, which the United States supported. This last EU initiative has the support of Argentina, Brazil, and Croatia, and possibly Japan and South Korea. The Dutch are hoping 80 countries will support the measure.

[1](#)5. (C) More generally, the Dutch asked about U.S. plans to advance human rights in the "new environment" reflected by the West's defeats in the HRC. As part of their response, the Dutch will defend the independence of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) and may also increase their contribution to the HCHR. The Dutch urge continued engagement by the United States and inquired whether the USG would participate in the 2009 Durban Review Conference, or like Canada, would refuse to attend.
Culbertson